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THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

ETHICS OF STATES.¹

THE lover of paradox can find no richer field than that of the ethics of states. On the one hand no institution has commanded nobler devotion or inspired loftier art; on the other, none has lent itself so ruthlessly to the destruction of every human interest and value, or has practiced so consistently what in common life we all call crime. On the one hand it has been presented by philosopher and publicist as the institution in which man may live nobly and well, as the institution in which freedom may be secured, or as the institution in which the organic unity of mankind is realized and the individual is raised to higher consciousness and larger horizons. On the other it has been convicted by history of organizing hatred more effectively than love; of organizing oppression more resolutely than safeguards of liberty; and of bending its energies and using its resources more unsparingly to destroy life than to save it. We should not expect to find in it the family affections, the charm of friendship, the ideals of religion. But we might look for respect for elementary rights. What are the facts? The State hales private persons before its bar if they violate person or property, break contracts, or enslave their fellows, but itself commits homicide, trespass, breaks treaties, and takes possession against their will of the persons and property of multitudes who have done it no harm.

¹ Delivered as the presidential address before a joint meeting of the American and Western Philosophical Associations at the University of Chicago, December 28, 1914.

And if we seek a final paradox, more striking than the others, we find it in the real or assumed solemnity with which nations at war on the one hand suppress discussion, claim that political considerations take precedence over morality, and regard victory as a mark of divine approval, while on the other they appeal to the justice of their cause and recognize the importance of giving it the color of self-defence. "Even victorious wars," said Bismarck, "cannot be justified unless they are forced upon one. . . . Success," he explained to Moltke when revising the Ems telegram, "however, essentially depends upon the impression which the origination of the war makes upon us and others; it is important that we should be the party attacked."¹ The present war has exemplified these various paradoxes in more striking form, but we do not need to look beyond the seas for illustrations of practically all of them. The story of Naboth's vineyard has been often repeated in the dealings of the United States with Indian lands. Our dealings with Colombia excited alarm in South America and have been condemned by many of our own citizens. Our first proposal as to the Panama tolls was at least a violation of what the other party to the treaty understood to be its meaning. The neglect of Congress to pass laws giving the Federal Courts the power to enforce treaty rights if these are violated by local communities like Louisiana or California, seems almost an equally flagrant sin of omission—it involves making promises which we do not take measures to carry out. If a private individual were similarly neglectful the law would certainly know how to deal with him. We know our own countrymen. We know English and German and French and Slav. We find their private morals not very different from ours. How can we explain the contrast between private and public conduct?

The simplest answer is that all the paradoxes come from confusing politics and morals. Politics is politics, as Machiavelli well knew. To apply morals to politics is like appraising electricity in terms of virtue instead of in volts and kilowatts. This is, however, too simple an answer, for it does not explain the anxiety of states for moral approval. Another simple answer is

¹ Bismarck, *The Man and the Statesman*, Vol. II, p. 101.

the old one that might is right. This may take either the cruder form that might makes right, or the more pious and plausible shape that strength of nations, though not of individuals, is the divine evidence of right and therefore any objections to the ethics of successful powers are to be condemned as puerile.

On either of these theories it is pedantic and futile to apply to great elementary forces or to the cosmos and its laws the petty measures set by human conventions of philosophic systems. It is like finding fault with the firmament because its stars are not arranged in kindergarten patterns, or complaining that gravity is inconsiderate to the man walking on an icy sidewalk. Another easy solution is, "my nation is sincere; others are hypocrites." But I venture to think this is too simple for the impartial scholar. I shall not essay the task of an appraiser of just what is right and wrong by an absolute standard. I attempt the more modest task of noting some of the historical and logical grounds for the paradoxes in political ethics. Such an explanation may not yield the virtuous thrill of superior morality which we feel when we hew Agag in pieces before the Lord, but it is perhaps more fitting for the consideration of a group of scholars in a neutral nation.

We should probably agree that the actual morality of men of European stock is a conglomerate of several codes. Five of these are:—(1) The code of self interest, based on the instincts for self-preservation, self-assertion, mastery, and possession, taking the rational forms of prudence, insistence upon rights, or ambition for expression and power. This is in so far praiseworthy as compared with inertness, sloth, or general weakness. (2) Closely related to this is the code of honor, which governs our behavior as members of certain types of special groups with some dominant interest or temper. (3) A third code, of legal standards, less emotional than that of honor, safeguards person, property, and contracts. It is important not between intimates but between dwellers in a country or parties to a bargain. (4) Fourth comes the code of family behavior, taught by the natural responses of parent to child, child to parent, or brother to sister. (5) Fifth, some more ideal code inspired by some cause, some personality, some imaginative vision, some response to personal

relations of friendship, or of a wider human group than that of honor.

Nations have the first two of these codes, self-interest and honor, strongly developed; they have rudiments of the third in international law. Some beginnings of the fifth we thought we had in science, art, literature, religion. But the balance of power between these different sets of controlling principles in the national state is very different from that which obtains in at least the more intelligent and orderly private citizen. In the individual the web of social relations of a positive sort has increased until it is unusual for even the selfish to assert nakedly his belief in the rightful preëminence of relatively exclusive self-assertion and self-regard. The reverse is true of nations. Preservation and even national expansion comes first, says Rümelin in his classic address—*salus publica suprema lex*. In the absence of any authority to secure mutual confidence a condition of mutual distrust prevails which enables a government to justify to itself almost any act on the ground of self-defense, and a proper manipulation of the press will go far toward convincing the people of the justification of the government. In the case of the individual's morals, law brings codes of honor before the bar of more rational and larger groups. With nations honor is given precedence over right. The statement of Sir Edward Grey that Great Britain would act in view of British interests, the national honor, and the nation's obligations, was perhaps not designed to place these three grounds of action in order of importance, but it would probably be generally accepted as representing such a scale in national ethics. In this series the order is,—first the direct, non-social, if not anti-social interests; second, the emotional interest bound up with some relatively exclusive group; third, recognition of relations to others, whether of free contract or of status. In individual morality the order is either reversed or else the terms interest, honor, and obligations, are given such ideal meanings as to make the exclusive aspect no longer relevant.

The important differences between the ethics of individuals and those of states are due in part to historical, in part to intrinsic

conditions. Historically we have in states a longer survival of the traits of morals between hostile or unfriendly groups. Intrinsically, organized states, like other corporations, are both more and less than individuals. They are more because they are trustees and protectors of certain interests and values for many members. They are less because in representing certain interests and purposes they take no account of many other interests and purposes. They are thus impersonal and subject to the limited morality which present society finds in all impersonal corporations.

Historically, two great forces have been active in the building of nations and empires, lust for conquest and desire of gain. The state has not ordinarily arisen as a further grouping of families and tribes. Practically all modern European states have arisen through conquest. The king and his band of warriors, gathered frequently from various tribes and countries, united only by lust of conquest and plunder, formed the political body which triumphed over clans or neighborhood communities. Here was a new method of organization which was more powerful than the old. After the first battle William the Norman with his handful of experts could hold in subjection the whole realm of England. Usually the political body included only the king and his warriors; the great mass of conquered natives remained in their kinships or communities, or as slaves outside the organization. They must obey it, they were not within it.

When once the conquest had been made, the king would defend the land against outside attacks, and enforce order within. He would impose his own peace and permit none but himself to seize person and property. Defense and sovereignty came first; protection to rights of subjects was not in the original intention but was wrested from the ruler by bargaining or by battle or by gradual enlargement of privileged groups. Law, which at first recognized few rights to any except the military masters, gradually gave protection to subjects, but it was only after centuries of struggle that the great mass of the people found freedom and a sense of participation in the power which previously they had been compelled to obey, or had followed with dog-like devotion

at the risk of property and life. Only in still more recent times has the state undertaken the care of health, the education of its children, the encouragement of science, the bringing of opportunity which makes the common resources available for the common man. The tradition of the national state is thus one of force, of hostility toward other nations, and of corresponding morals.

Within the last three hundred years another process has been operative in the formation and enlargement of states, which has also had an important influence upon public morality. The great colonizing movement, which began with the discovery of America, was more definitely and consciously economic in aim than the earlier types of state formation. North and South America, and later India and Africa, transformed England, Portugal, Spain, and France from nations to empires. The new possessions were at first managed largely for profit rather than for the benefit of the colonists or of the natives. The chartered companies, such as the East India Company, empowered to "make peace and war with the heathen nations" had little scruple as to the means by which they defeated rival companies or gained control over the lives and resources of millions. And when the home government began to look into the purposes and methods of these governments organized for profits, and to control the more flagrant abuses of power, there remained in the case of most of them the factor of differences of color, race, and religion between ruler and ruled. Imperial power under such conditions has been doubly dangerous to moral standards. "Impunity," says Bryce, "corrupts the ordinary man." It was generally understood that the American soldiers in the Philippines did things which they would have considered quite unworthy of military standards at home. It was publicly stated by members of the war department that the United States in its conduct of the war was not bound by international laws of war because the Philipinos had never been parties to international agreements. The famous order of General Smith in the Philippines to kill and burn and spare no boy over ten, or the address to the German troops departing for China at the time of the Boxer outbreak

could scarcely have been issued for warfare in the United States or Europe. Water torture or dum-dum bullets may be used against men of lower civilization. The insidious and corrupting influence of almost irresponsible government exercised by people of one race over those of another has been impartially set forth by Hobson. No doubt the administrator of high purpose and broad sympathy finds in such a situation opportunity for the finest loyalty to duty and the most sensitive regard for those who cannot help themselves; but not to look beyond our own borders, we know how shameful has been much of the history of our own administrative officials in dealing with the American Indians. If we are correctly informed, the zeal for the exploitation of this race has not lessened to this day and is still engaged in manipulating government for selfish ends.

The intrinsic character of the state and the nature of its organization are well adapted to maintain and reenforce the historical precedence of self-preservation and honor over justice, not to mention benevolence. On the positive side, as already noted, the state is more than the individual. It is in its idea the organization of men through which they achieve what is impossible for them singly. By its restraint of violence, by its enforcing of contracts, by its protection of rights, it makes possible in the individual just those moral virtues founded on peace, confidence, truth, and freedom from fear whose absence we deplore in the conduct of states themselves. It may be fairly said that the evils of present international politics are due not to too much but to too little political organization. And, in defense of the national state, it may be urged that it represents about as large a group as in the present stage of civilization can act harmoniously and feel its order to be autonomy and its culture its own free creation. We cannot do justice to the men now yielding up their lives, we cannot be fair to the honored and respected men, our own friends and colleagues on both sides of this present war, except as we recognize the full worth of that which enlists their devotion. We may freely acknowledge the high purpose of the state; we may even agree with Rümelin that the state is bound to maintain itself, and that under existing

conditions this may involve means that are abhorrent to our standards of morality.

But at the same time let us not fall into the fallacy of saying that evil is good. Going about armed, spending a large part of one's days and wealth in revolver practice, and of one's nights in listening at the neighbor's door to discover plots, devising means to catch him napping and studying the precise moment at which one may shoot first and still call it self-defense, lynching suspects, burning houses, and incidentally shooting the children of bystanders, all this may be 'necessary' in certain stages of savagery or frontier life. But no man can call it good. And in so far as nations conduct themselves in this fashion, we must challenge the situation. We must maintain that if our end requires such means we are in a stupid and pitiable condition. It is scarce worth applying terms of right and wrong except that the whole situation is wrong. Instead of glorifying national or imperial states, we should say: If this is the best they can do, we had better look for another principle of organization and reserve for that our enthusiasm and moral applause.

We are forced then to look to the aspect in which the state is not more but less than the individual, its abstractness of purpose, its methods of organization.

We are familiar with corporations organized for various specific ends and with the limits which these ends impose. Banks and manufacturing concerns are organized for profit. If a bank is asked for charity we feel it an appropriate answer that, while its stockholders or directors as individuals may respond, the bank's purpose does not authorize such use of funds. The manufacturing concern as such may serve the public, but its primary duty is to pay dividends upon capital invested. Our law and morality both recognize that bodies organized purely for acquisition need public control. Incorporate acquisitiveness is felt to be dangerous. The political corporation is more complex. It may include in its professed aims not merely the common defense, the establishment of justice, the blessings of liberty, but also the promotion of the general welfare. But even our Federal government, organized with so broad a purpose, has been very chary of

the general welfare in comparison with the common defense. Millions for defense, thousands for health or education, has been our national policy.

It may go without saying that the country has spent largely for education through state and local bodies. But the fact remains that the national government has not been concerned with the social and human needs of the people, and has probably suffered by its abstractness. European national states have concerned themselves more largely with human interests, but other conditions have kept the balance from inclining far in that direction. The central object of the national state has been on the whole power. The evils from which it suffers are, in part at least, due to the unregulated and only very partially responsible organization for power. Such an impersonal corporation has no room for feelings either humanitarian or resentful. It spares no one who opposes it; it turns not aside to indulge triumph or hatred. If I appeal again to Bismarck it is because he embodied more abstractly than any other this political principle and described more frankly its nature.

The consolidation and organization of Germany was for Bismarck a supreme consideration which sometimes called for war, sometimes for peace; sometimes for urging conquest upon a reluctant king, sometimes for a checking of that same king's desire for triumphal entry or for seizure of territory; sometimes for exciting public opinion through a revised telegram, again for bold resistance of a military party that would defend by striking first in order to catch the adversary unprepared. In all these the political as such is brought clearly into relief. For example, in speaking of the situation during the siege of Paris, when operations were delayed because of influences of a professedly humanitarian nature, Bismarck wrote: "A decision, memorable in the world's history, of the secular struggle between the two neighboring peoples was at stake, and in danger of being ruined, through personal and predominately female influences with no historical justification, influences which owed their efficacy, not to political considerations but to feelings which the terms humanity and civilization, imported to us from England, still

rouse in German natures." On the other hand, of the needs in 1866, he said: "Moved by this consideration" (*i. e.*, whether the feelings we left behind in our opponents were implacable) "I had a political motive for avoiding, rather than bringing about, a triumphal entry into Vienna in the Napoleonic style. In positions such as ours were then, it is a political maxim after a victory not to enquire how much you can squeeze out of your opponent, but only to consider what is politically necessary."

If power and prestige, or repute of power, are thus the primary purpose of national organization, it is *natural that governments* should have agencies in army and navy to maintain this power, and conversely that these agencies should react strongly to strengthen the national bent. It is against all human nature that a man of ability should be content to devote his life to practising for a game of golf without ever playing it. And here again we have the competent testimony of Bismarck. The man who deliberately planned to achieve by blood and iron the unity of Germany was not a mollicoddle or even a pacifist. Of Von Moltké he says: "His love of combat and delight in battles were a great support to me in carrying out the policy I regarded as necessary in opposition to the intelligible and justifiable aversion in a most influential quarter." And then referring to various occasions on which this professional zeal proved inconvenient he makes the following highly significant reflection: "It is natural that in the staff of the army not only younger active officers, but likewise experienced strategists, should feel the need of turning to account the efficiency of the troops led by them, and their own capacity to lead, and of making them prominent in history. It would be a matter of regret if this effect of the military spirit did not exist in the army; the task of keeping its results within such limits as the nation's need of peace can justify is the duty of the political, not the military, heads of the state. That at the time of the Luxemburg question, during the crisis of 1875, invented by Gortchakoff and France, and even down to the more present times, the staff and its leaders have allowed themselves to be led astray and to endanger peace, lies in the very spirit of the institution, which I would not forego.

It only becomes dangerous under a monarch whose policy lacks sense of proportion and power to resist one-sided and constitutionally unjustifiable influences."¹

The other organ of the state which shows the abstractness of corporate morals is the diplomatic service. The traditions of this service call for cunning, as those of the military arm for force. Its personnel is drawn largely from a special class. Its environment is specialized. Like the agents or attorneys of corporations it is urged to press claims which it knows are dubious or worse; it is supposed to have little discretion or conscience of its own, but to be governed by the needs of the government it represents. As is pointed out forcibly by Ponsonby in a recent article, it is in many ways a very inadequate medium for the great interests of the people concerned. Like the corporation attorney it is trained to be astute, it is not always likely to think greatly or to consider all the human issues at stake.

At this point the objection rises from many impatient of academic criticism: "You speak as though self-preservation needed apology or could be subjected to some assumed higher standard, whereas it is either itself the supreme value which tests all others or else is at least the most conclusive evidence of worth. In great part this is the familiar doctrine of survival of the fittest which it would be impossible to discuss within the limits of this address even if such discussion was necessary. But in part it has some new features. It professes to find that in modern conditions of struggle and survival it is really moral qualities which count. For Jack Horner the inference from plums to virtue may have been premature, for there was too much luck. Or to put it in religious terms, it was not capable of absolute demonstration that God was rewarding virtue. But now when plums are extracted not by rule of thumb but by organized research and systematic industry, when survival depends upon efficiency and efficiency depends upon science, organizing power, temperance, chastity, self sacrifice, and all the virtues, the case is changed.

Professor Münsterberg draws a parallel between success in war and success in business competition. "On the whole our

¹ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 103.

economic system is backed by the belief that free competition brings gain to the worthy and keeps down the less efficient. In this sense certainly no unfailing justice lies in the decision of the weapons, but, in the great average, history has proved that those nations will rise which are worthy of it and those will fall which deserve punishment from the higher point of view of civilization." If it be objected that an army is no better test of a nation's character than a football team of a university, the reply is: "The intellectual and moral qualities of a nation do come to expression in a modern war. It is not mere strength and not mere pluck, and least of all mere possession of guns which decides today in warfare. It is the total make-up of a nation with its thoroughness and its energy and the mentality and its readiness to bring sacrifices." The superiority of the German army "does not result from a merely outer professional war technique, but comes because the German army is the embodiment of the national soul with all its intellectual and moral energies." To be sure, the result of this present war may not afford an accurate test of moral superiority because there are more nations on one side than on the other. "The allied nations cannot prove any higher qualities . . . as their final victory would mean only a quantitative superiority." If one stood against one the proof would be conclusive. No one is concerned to deny the consummate scientific ability, the intellectual energies, the discipline, the loyalty, the heroism which are shown in a successful army. Yet when it is proposed to test moral superiority by a one to one contest, irrespective of the size of nations, it is difficult to see how we are eliminating quantity. Great Britain against the Boers, the United States against Spain, Germany against the Belgians,—these were one to one, but it would be a bold inference that these contests established such superiority as would justify the extinction of the lesser power.

The doctrine of efficiency as a moral criterion is also given a religious turn. "Victory in war is the method by which, in the economy of God's providence, the sound nation supersedes the unsound, because in our time such victory is the direct offspring of a higher efficiency, and the higher efficiency is the logical

outcome of the higher morals. . . . The Lord of Hosts has made righteousness the path to victory. In the crash of conflict, in the horrors of battlefields piled with the dead, the dying, and the wounded, a vast ethical intention has still prevailed."¹ Or finally war is given the moral function of serving as the instrument for a redistribution of territory from time to time according to the strength and therefore, it is assumed by those who would in this associate strength with merit, according to the desert or need of nations.

On this I offer two comments. (1) If any one thing stands out clearly before the judgment and conscience of the American people as the result of the recent decades of economic struggle it is this: While success may be secured by public service it may also be secured by strangling competitors, and for this latter purpose the moral virtues are not the qualities chiefly necessary. There is both fair and unfair competition, and the unfair has resources which will often win the day. Is there any less reason to hold that the political power which is most astute in forming alliances, shrewdest in calculating a favorable moment to strike, subtlest in provoking its rival into taking the offensive, most unscrupulous in bribery, will often find these means effective? And there is a deeper consideration for the sensitive conscience. Looking at business competition from a purely economic point of view, we might regard it as fair that the weaker should go to the wall, and the great corporation absorb all the smaller producers. Looking at political competition merely as a means of securing efficient organization, we might be indifferent to the disappearance of small states as political entities. But if economic replacement means at the same time reduction of the great body of citizens of a community to the status of employees; if it means control of legislatures, courts, schools, and churches by the great and efficient corporation, we pause. We have seen this tried more or less successfully in various cities and states and we don't like the taste of it. We have decided that unregulated business, even if more successful, is not to be trusted. An organization existing abstractly for profit needs to be controlled, we believe,

¹ Harold Frazer Wyatt, *The Nineteenth Century and After*.

by the conception of personal worth. Similarly, if we should look at political competition merely as a means of testing efficiency of government we might be indifferent to the disappearance of smaller states or to the tendency to monopoly. But despite all our own inefficiency in national, state and city government, we of America still believe there is a value in self-government. We are young compared with many of the lesser states of Europe or Asia. But to extinguish our national life would be we think a loss of something inseparable from our personality. The national tradition, with all its sins, does make a genuine factor in the higher spiritual life. To destroy any of the peoples which have come to a sense of national life violates the same sense of justice which holds sacred the life of the individual. To reduce by force the variety and richness found in the many peoples and races to one or a half dozen patterns might make for political efficiency, but it would be a hideous wrong. Lord Cromer well observes that democratic imperialists have two ideals which are apt to be mutually destructive, the ideal of good government, and the ideal of self-government. Every dweller in a democratic nation feels the conflict, but we of America at least are not ready to abandon the principle of self-government. Only by this is the kingdom of ends possible.

(2) The second remark is that the doctrine of survival as value, or as evidence of value, persists because it is half true. All value does presuppose some living, willing agent to appreciate and maintain the good. And while ideals transcend the immediate present life, it is also true that life transcends all present ideals and is constantly giving birth to new ones. Moreover, even as self consciousness involves a world of objects, moral valuation implies shaping out a moral world, and this means real achievement. Moral energies mean not thwarting and extinction but fuller life.

Yet it is certain that the doctrine in question in either form is only half true and is, in my judgment, the great materialism—the only one likely to do serious harm. Unless we are ready to go the whole way and deny that anything that exists is evil,

we must use some other standard of value than existence, not to mention the fallacy of ruling out of values the sympathy which may interfere with self-assertion, the love of art and letters which does not necessarily make for existence. If we admit—and I suspect that if the advocates of the doctrine should find themselves in the defeated party, they would be first to make the admission—that sometimes the worse conquers the better, if we grant that God ever permits truth on the scaffold, wrong on the throne, then, we abandon the principle of survival as a reliable criterion. *Die Weltgeschichte* may be indeed *das Weltgericht*, but it is itself judged by a still higher court. All that we prize most has come from the spirit which has not accepted the cosmic process or the historical process as a final valuation. Small as the world of the free creative spirit appears, its values are for its members supreme. The still small voice is more significant than the earthquake and the fire. It alone decides whether we shall acquiesce or fight on for what we hold to be right and truth.

Let us look also at honor which is often ranked highest in the ethical codes of states. There is no doubt that the appeal to honor touches deep chords in the natures of all of us. It lies near to splendid virtues. It seems to strike a higher note than self-interest. The latter can be stigmatized by opponents as greed or jealousy. But honor is so noble in its associations that if a nation goes to war to maintain its honor apparently there is nothing more to be said. To question the morality of such an act is to write oneself down as a coward or poltroon, and who of us wishes so to be regarded? It often asserts supremacy over any rational interests and brings nations to rash and destructive enterprise of war. It is relied upon by masterful directors of states to achieve results for which calm reflection upon future advantage would be inadequate.

To be sure, honor in the individual, though it vibrates with the finest emotion, is very curious in its workings. The honor of a soldier has almost to the present moment required him to fight duels, quite irrespective of the law of the land. It is only a decade since an incident in one of the European armies showed

the military code. Two boys grew up as playmates; one later entered the army and became a petty officer, the other entered the navy. On shore leave the sailor met his old comrade and extended his hand in friendly greeting instead of giving the due salute. The army officer in return ran him through and killed him. When asked why he did not arrest the sailor if he thought him wanting in respect, he replied that he remembered X, from whom a civilian had escaped, and who in consequence had been so taunted by his fellows that he was driven to suicide. A nominal penalty was imposed, but the man felt proud of his action, and was no doubt honored by his fellow officers. The honor of a gentleman has also been highly technical. To cheat at cards has always been dishonorable, to cheat a woman of lower station not always. Gambling debts are characteristically debts of honor; the tradesman may wait. If any doubted a gentleman's word honor must be kept bright by proof of sword, but where a lady was concerned honor required one to lie like a gentleman. With the rise of the middle class to dignity and power we began to hear of business honor, which likewise has its peculiarities. It is scrupulous in the payment of debts, but men of high standing have done some queer things in corporation finance without regarding them as dishonorable; and, on the other side of business relations, honor would hardly be tarnished by any sort of exploitation of employees. With the rise of the laborer to class consciousness he too has framed a code of honor, a *Herrenmoral*,—paradoxical as such an idea would have seemed to the gentleman of older days. He looks upon the scab as the older gentleman looked upon the villain. The unionist's sense of honor will not permit him to take another union man's job; it would not be offended by soldiering on his own.

In certain respects the conception of what honor requires of the individual has been modified, largely by the leveling force of law, and the rise of new classes with new standards. In America it is not considered necessary to maintain honor by the duel, nor is manual labor so dishonorable as entirely to unclass the worker. A man may be willing to have a cause, even a murder, submitted to a court without losing honor. He may make it a part of his

honor to be reasonable, to keep his word, to protect the weak, in a word to incorporate into his code of honor the elements of justice and sympathy, as well as of strength.

National codes of honor resist this reconstruction. The essence of national honor to be guarded at all hazards is repute for strength. The way to maintain honor is to show strength, preferably by war, or, in the case of backward or smaller peoples, by punitive expeditions. Former President Taft has pointed out several instances in the diplomatic history of this country, as in the Canadian boundary question, or the Trent affair, when it has been loudly asserted that to recede from a claim or even to arbitrate, would be to lose honor. "To lay a finger on the honor of a State is to contest its existence," says Treitschke. "That State which will not be untrue to itself must possess an acute sense of honor. It is no violet to flower unseen. Its strength should be shown signally in the light of day, and it dare not allow that strength to be questioned, even indirectly. If its flag be insulted, it must ask satisfaction; if that satisfaction be not forthcoming, it must declare war, however trifling the occasion may seem."

By this conception of honor a democratic nation like our own is seemingly as likely to be swept off its feet as the more military nations of Europe. The fact is we are hypnotized by the words 'honor' and 'the flag' without asking whether honor may not have other standards than repute for strength, other supports than the sword. A press urged on to war by private interests of invested capital, no less than a press manipulated by governmental agencies, may make effective appeal to popular passions if it strikes this note.

It was such a conception of honor that inspired the demand in the United States for war with Spain when the *Maine* was supposed to have been sunk by external force. It was this which nearly involved us in war with Mexico. It was apparently a belief that Austria-Hungary's honor had been infringed upon and could only be satisfied by blood which lay back of Germany's declaration, "It is impossible for us to bring our ally before a European court in its difference with Servia." It has since been

shown that all ends not covered by the military conception of honor would have been secured by peaceful negotiation with Spain.

The legal code depends for its origin in the individual upon the presence of organized society, and in particular upon an authority which defends and enforces standards. The good citizen makes this legal code a moral law as well. Under this he is no longer compelled to defend himself by arms or to live in continual fear of lawless neighbors. Nations, unfortunately, have no such protection by a commonly recognized superior authority which is able to enforce the standards of right. Hence they live under more or less constant mutual fear. They act as judges in their own causes. They are not daily reminded of the presence of a law higher than the will of the individual. The process of building up a moral consciousness without any actual organization of international society is necessarily slow. We may sometimes affect to estimate lightly the standards of law in comparison with those of morality, but no student of history can doubt the influence of law upon the formation of a moral consciousness. Law has been the schoolmaster to develop the consciousness of duty, and we need not be too cynical in our judgment upon the morals of nations which have lacked this education.

For no one who looks at the world process as a whole can fail to note that in the situation which has driven us almost to despair of civilization there are, on the one hand elements of crisis and special strain, and, on the other, indications of an enlarging public consciousness which promises better conditions for the future. The elements of crisis and strain are familiar;—the rapid growth of European civilization due to science, invention, improved health, enlarging intercommunication and trade; the nearing completion of a process of conquest, settlement and establishment of markets, “by which all the races of the world have been affected, and all the backward ones placed in more or less complete dependence upon the advanced”;¹ the disintegration of states whose civilization has no unity of spirit and no genuine liberty or progress; the intensifying of race pride and national feeling due

¹ Bryce, *The Relations of the Advanced and Backward Races of Mankind*, p. 7.

in part to the awakening consciousness of backward or hitherto suppressed or isolated groups.

The indications of an enlarging public consciousness out of which a higher public conscience may be built are also evident. For economic purposes the whole world is becoming one, and each people is compelled to know and judge the foreign conditions which cause stringency and distress in its own land. As the enormous business corporations have brought out into the open the naked forces of competition, divested of all personal checks, society has been forced to a deeper view of the relations of economic forces to human welfare. It has adopted measures for control on the basis of fairness, not merely of efficiency. Politically are we not at a similar stage? The smaller states formerly carried on their petty intrigues, their petty wars; they resented with fierce irrational duels real or fancied insults to their military standards of honor; they pursued the ethics of self-preservation and expansion without serious check. But now we see the full meaning of it all. We see not only the survival of past jealousies and the rankling of past injustices, but also the results of making strength and power and selfish exploitation the determining forces in politics. The appeals which both sides make for moral approval mark a new stage in the development of a world conscience. Scientific studies are showing the artificiality of most of the differences between races and nations, sometimes regarded as so radical, and now in the heat of passion magnified into fixed grades of moral worth or infamy. May we not see also some promise of hope that, when the consequences of past political ideals and methods have been brought home in all their horror to all peoples, there will be felt the need of adding to political codes of self preservation and honor the further codes of justice toward others, of friendly intercourse, and even, remote as it may seem, of devotion to the uniting ideals of mutual understanding, mutual aid, common sympathy, and common humanity?

JAMES H. TUFTS.